

Service Date: August 1, 2005

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

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IN THE MATTER OF NORTHWESTERN	)	UTILITY DIVISION
ENERGY, Application for Approval of Natural	)	
Gas Procurement Plan	)	DOCKET NO. N2005.6.101

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND INTERVENTION DEADLINE**

On June 15, 2005, NorthWestern Energy (NWE), 40 East Broadway Street, Butte, Montana, 59701-9394, filed before the Public Service Commission (PSC) an application for approval of natural gas procurement guidelines. The guidelines propose a two-year planning cycle with annual procurement-plan review by the PSC and ongoing NWE consideration of demand-side management resources, risk mitigation, reduction of price volatility, contract durations, and so forth, in efforts to achieve the best interests of the consumer.

NWE's proposed guidelines are filed in compliance with NWE, Montana Consumer Counsel (MCC), and PSC agreements reached during settlement of previous NWE gas procurement matters before the PSC. Although the guidelines are presented in the form of proposed rules applicable to natural gas default supply utilities, it is most probable that the guidelines, if approved by the PSC, will be approved as NWE tariff provisions applicable only to NWE.

A copy of NWE's application is available for inspection at the business offices of NWE, the PSC, and the MCC. The MCC, 616 Helena Avenue, P.O. Box 201703, Helena, Montana 59620-1703, telephone (406) 444-2771, is available and may be contacted to assist and represent the interests of the consuming public in this matter.

Any interested person who is directly affected by NWE's request before the PSC and who intends to participate in the matter as a party must intervene by filing a Petition to Intervene with the PSC, 1701 Prospect Avenue, P.O. Box 202601, Helena, Montana 59620-2601, no later than August 16, 2005. An original and ten copies of the Petition to Intervene must be filed with the PSC. One copy must be served on NWE and the MCC (addresses above). Any interested person

who does not prefer to formally participate may submit written public comments on the matter to the PSC at the above address. Public comments may also be submitted to the PSC through the PSC's web-based comment form at <http://psc.mt.gov> (go to "consumer assistance," "talk to us," "pending proceeding comments," then complete and submit the form). Public comments, written or electronic, must be submitted no later than August 16, 2005.

The PSC's jurisdiction over this matter is provided at Title 69, MCA. The substantive and procedural law applicable is Title 69, MCA, especially at Ch. 3 (public utilities), ARM Title 38, Ch. 5 (utilities), Title 2, Ch. 4, MCA (MAPA), ARM Title 38, Ch. 2 (PSC procedural rules), and any prior orders of the PSC which may bear on the issues presented.

A procedural order governing the procedure and schedule in this matter is being issued simultaneously with this notice. A copy of the procedural order is available from the PSC. The procedural order provides: discovery, if any, on the NWE proposal must be submitted to NWE on or before August 23, 2005; NWE must respond to discovery on or before August 30, 2005; and simultaneous initial written comments on NWE's proposal must be submitted by NWE and each party no later than September 8, 2005. A prehearing conference or other meeting for discussions regarding this matter is not anticipated, but may be scheduled by the PSC, on its own motion or request by a party.

The PSC initially notices proceedings through use of general service lists. Interested persons not intervening, but wishing to remain on the service list to receive notices and orders, must notify the PSC in writing by the date fixed for intervention. Failure to submit notification will result in removal from the service list in this docket.

BY THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

GREG JERGSON, Chairman  
BRAD MOLNAR, Vice-Chairman  
DOUG MOOD, Commissioner  
ROBERT H. RANEY, Commissioner  
THOMAS J. SCHNEIDER, Commissioner

